

# A Better Way

Eastern Division

ROADS Service

Issue 5 January 2003

Keeping you up to date with Roads Service Initiatives in Belfast

## New Technology for Belfast Buses

A new joint Roads Service/Translink project employing the technology of a Global Positioning System (GPS) is set to provide benefits to bus users.

Waiting passengers will now be informed of the arrival time of the next bus through special display signs in selected bus shelters and other locations. Information regarding cancellations or delays will also be provided.

Mr David Orr, Roads Service's Director of Network Services, said "This state of the art technology will let passengers know when the next bus is coming and should improve bus journey times. We hope it will go some way to encourage people to use the bus, rather than contribute to congestion in their private cars."

The project, which will cost an estimated £1.6 million, will involve installing special equipment onto buses that will transmit a signal to at least three orbiting satellites which will specifically identify the bus location.

This information can then be transmitted directly from the bus to a base location to allow the movement of the bus to be tracked along its journey.



Proposed bus shelter facilities

Another feature of the system will enable buses to have priority at traffic signals. This will improve public transport efficiency by reducing delay to buses. When the bus approaches a junction it will transmit data to the traffic signal controller to indicate its presence. If appropriate, the traffic signal will then either be held on a green signal, or alternatively be returned to green as soon as possible.

It is intended that the system will be operational on the City Express and Centrelink routes by early 2003 and it is hoped to eventually include all Quality Bus Corridors and possibly the long distance Goldliner routes.

Mr Ted Hesketh, Managing Director of Translink, said "Translink have been advocating such a system for some time. It will greatly improve the availability of information to our passengers."

## Roads Service Recycles

Roads Service has taken a step forward for the environment by introducing the use of recycled material into its current resurfacing programme. Asphalt footways in the Twinburn Estate in Monkstown have been resurfaced using up to 20% recycled materials.

Although this method of footway maintenance does have a small cost benefit the main

advantage is to the environment since there is a reduced need for quarrying, asphalt production and haulage. Colin Campbell, Section Engineer for Newtownabbey and Carrickfergus, said, "We are all becoming increasingly aware of the need to conserve valuable natural resources and the problems associated with the disposal of waste

products. The introduction of recycled materials in footway resurfacing is a welcome step in the right direction."

The material is, as yet, untried and its performance will be closely monitored.

# Cycling News

## Major Cycle Scheme Completed

Work on the Laganbank Road (below), the final on-road section of the National Cycle Network (NCN) Belfast to Lisburn route, has now been completed. This part of the route has been transformed with a joint Roads Service/Laganside scheme incorporating granite setts and kerbs, coloured surfacing and semi mature trees to visually enhance this road.



## Advanced Cycling

Two Advanced Stop Lines have been installed at either end of the Ormeau Embankment, one at its junction with Ormeau Road (below) and the other at the Ravenhill Road junction. These are the first of their kind in Northern Ireland.

Advanced Stop Lines allow cyclists to position themselves at the front of traffic to allow them to get safely away when the lights change to green. They also have the advantage of allowing the cyclists to position themselves away from direct vehicle fumes.



If you would like further information about cycling please visit the Roads Service website at:

[www.drndi.gov.uk/roads/cycling](http://www.drndi.gov.uk/roads/cycling)

## Northern Ireland Cycling Strategy

The Northern Ireland Cycling Strategy was launched by the former minister on 19 June 2000. It initiated a range of measures aimed at improving conditions for cyclists and making cycling a more attractive option.

Government, District Councils and voluntary sector organisations have all made significant commitments that contribute to the Strategy's targets to:

- double the number of trips by cycle (on 2000 figures) by the end of 2005; and
- quadruple the number of trips by cycle (on 2000 figures) by the end of 2015

The first progress report (pictured above), launched by the Minister on 19 June, describes many of the activities undertaken and highlights a number of improvements for cycling that have been implemented up to the end of last year. Copies are available at libraries or by contacting Transportation Unit, Avenue House, Belfast (9040 8000).

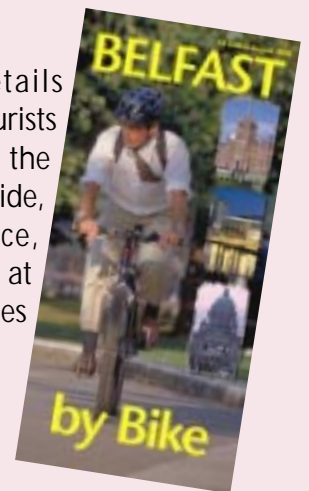


## Belfast by Bike launched

A new map, Belfast by Bike, which details recommended cycle routes for commuters and tourists throughout Belfast was launched in October by the former DRD Minister, Peter Robinson. This free guide, developed in partnership with Roads Service, Sustrans and Belfast City Council, is available at tourist information centres, cycling outlets, libraries and council offices.



*l-r Geoff Allister (Roads Service - Director of Engineering), Peter Robinson MP (Former DRD Minister), Denis O'Hagan (Head of Transportation Unit), Paul Thompson (Roads Service - Cycling Officer)*



# Traffic Information Initiatives Unveiled

Major initiatives to get up-to-date traffic information to motorists before they begin their journeys have been unveiled recently by Angela Smith MP, the Minister responsible for the Department for Regional Development.

The developments include a new traffic website, a pilot notification project which will provide people who work in Belfast City Centre with early information about major traffic disruption, and new signs on motorways aimed at improving road safety.

The Minister said " *These initiatives underline the fact that Roads Service is at the forefront in both the UK and across Europe in the application of intelligent transport systems for traffic control and the provision of traffic information.*"

" *These new developments will further enhance the existing service of providing traffic information to the public and will also assist in improving road safety.*"

## Trafficwatch Northern Ireland

A new website (below) has been set up by Roads Service, with the assistance of StreamOn.net, to provide up to date dynamic information on current traffic conditions. The site also gives information about ongoing roadworks and gives access to real time pictures from four traffic monitoring cameras in Belfast.

## Early Notification Project

A pilot project has also been launched which involves employers in Belfast receiving e-mailed information from the Traffic Information and Control Centre about major abnormal disruption to traffic flows. The scheme has been set up by Roads Service with assistance from Belfast City Centre Management. A small number of companies have been invited to take part in the initial trial of the project and it is hoped to expand to a larger number of employers in the future.

## Motorway Communication

Finally, a £1.5 million project to extend motorway control has just been completed. New motorway gantries and cantilever signals have been erected on the M2 northbound prior to the Sandyknowes and Templepatrick interchanges and also on the M1 westbound prior to Sprucefield and M1 eastbound at Dunmurry. These facilities will provide lane control signals and advisory speeds, and will also assist in improving road safety by displaying information on traffic conditions ahead.

The screenshot shows the trafficwatch Northern Ireland website. At the top left, the logo reads "trafficwatch NORTHERN IRELAND". A navigation menu on the left includes links for "home", "about trafficwatch", "Traffic Information & Control Centre", "Traffic Control in the Urban Road Network", "Traffic Control in the Motorway Network", "Traffic and Travel Information", "European Projects", "traffic news", "cameras", "roadworks report", "contact", and "links". The main content area features a "traffic bulletin" with three entries: "19/11/2002 09:31 Traffic Conditions, Greater Belfast Area.", "19/11/2002 13:43 Roadworks", and "19/11/2002 16:23 New Signal Phasing". To the right, there is a "trafficwatch Cameras" section with a "CLICK HERE TO VIEW" button. At the bottom, there is a banner for "avoid delays with trafficwatch" and the "ROADS Service" logo. The footer contains copyright information: "©2002 Department for Regional Development for Northern Ireland. Roads Service - Traffic Information and Control Centre."

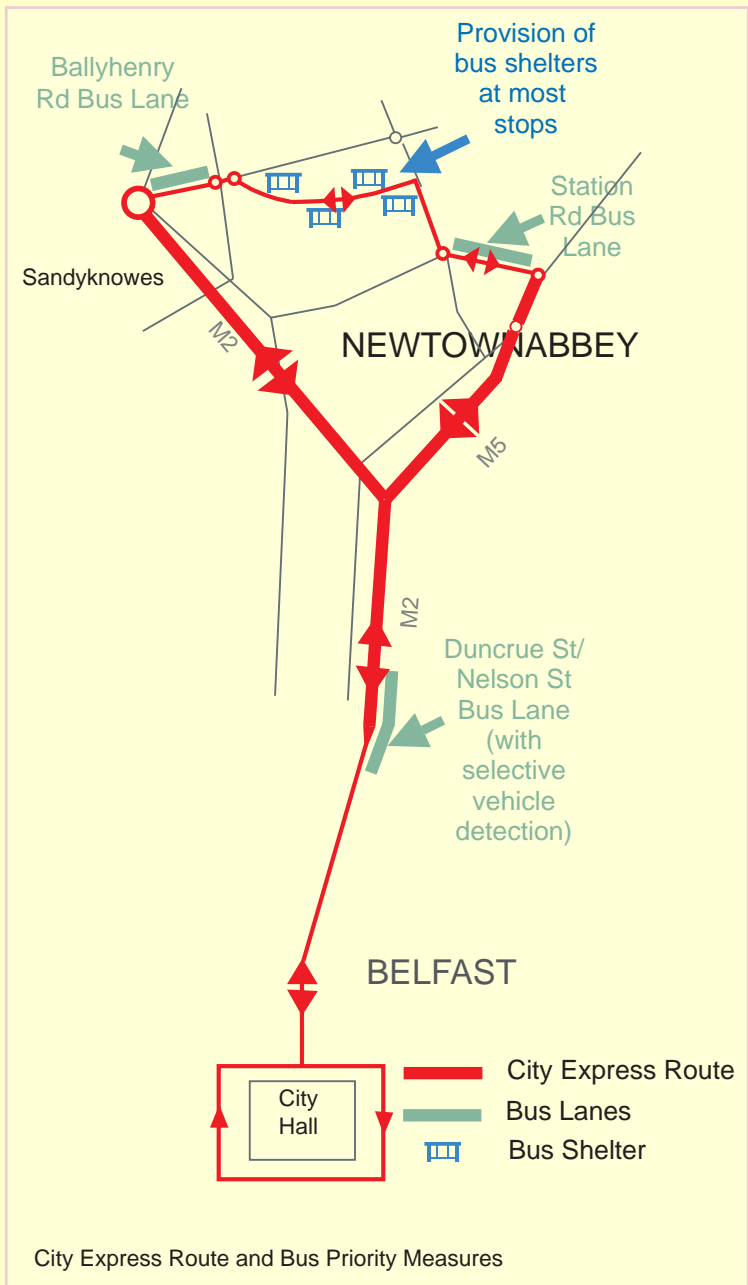
For further information visit the *trafficwatch* website at [www.trafficwatchni.com](http://www.trafficwatchni.com)

# City Express Route Completed

A package of bus priority measures has been introduced on the City Express Route which runs between Belfast and Newtownabbey. These include bus lanes, selective vehicle detection (which gives buses priority at signals), improved access/waiting facilities and the provision of shelters at most stops. (See diagram opposite).

In order to increase efficiency two route changes have also been made. The first was to remove the previous diversion off the Fairview Road, the second was to divert some of the services using the clockwise route (1A) to use Station Road instead of Doagh Road.

Roads Service is also considering the introduction of a bus lane on the M2 on-slip at Sandyknoves.



Bus Lane at Ballyhenry Road

# Dundonald Terminus gets a facelift

Roads Service has updated the terminus at the Ulster Hospital which had fallen into a poor state of repair.

The old brick shelter has been demolished to make way for two high quality shelters in the latest design. The bus turning area has also been redesigned to allow the buses to pull closer to the kerb and has been resurfaced using a distinctive red material.

These improvements will bring a great benefit to passengers using these facilities.



New terminus facilities at Dundonald

**For further information about any of these initiatives please contact:**

**Bus Priority** Harry Armstrong 028 9025 3022  
**Cycling** Paul Thompson 028 9025 3152

**Traffic Information** Brian Maxwell 028 9025 4500  
**Maintenance** Colin Campbell 028 9025 4046